

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 NEA-10
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R 121702Z SEP 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0945
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAKAR 6152

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MASS, UR, SO, ET
SUBJECT: DRAWING AFRICAN ATTENTION TO SOVIET ACTIVITY IN THE
HORN

REF: (A) STATE 214253 (B) STATE 210166

1. SUMMARY: SENEGALESE OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED WITH THE
SOVIET ROLE AS ARMS SUPPLIER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA CONFLICT,
BUT TO DATE THE GOS HAS SAID NOTHING PUBLICLY ABOUT THIS
CONCERN. ONE MAJOR REASON MAY BE THAT SENEGALESE HAVE VERY
MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE CONFLICT. THEY STRONGLY SUPPORT OAU
CONCEPT OF INVIOABILITY OF FRONTIERS, BUT THEY ARE REPELLED
BY ETHIOPIA'S RADICAL REGIME AND TROUBLED BY SOVIET SUPPORT.
OUR BEST APPROACH HERE WOULD BE FOR ME TO RAISE MATTER WITH
PRESIDENT SENGHOR WHEN HE RETURNS TO DAKAR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 23.
END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE DISCUSSED POINTS RAISED IN REFTEL AND THE HORN OF
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AFRICA CONFLICT, PARTICULARLY THE SOVIET ARMS SUPPLIER ROLE,
WITH SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL AMBASSADOR YOUSSEPH
SYLLA. (MOST SENIOR OFFICIALS OF GOS HAVE NOT YET RETURNED
FROM SUMMER LEAVE AND TRAVEL. PRESIDENT SENGHOR IS
EXPECTED BACK ABOUT SEPTEMBER 23; FOREIGN MINISTER SECK,
SEPTEMBER 16.)
AS DIRECTEUR DE CABINET IN MINISTRY SYLLA'S ROLE IS ANALAGOUS

TO THAT OF UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS HABIB.

3. OFFICIAL SENEGAL POSITION ON HORN OF AFRICA CONFLICT WAS STATED MOST RECENTLY IN INTERVIEW BY PRESIDENT SENGHOR APPEARING IN LE MONDE OF SEPTEMBER 6. AS IN PAST, SENGHOR PLACED MAXIMUM EMPHASIS ON RESPECTING PRESENT FRONTIERS. HE SAID, "IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO RESPECT THE FRONTIERS INHERITED FROM COLONIZATION." SENGHOR ADDED THAT HE WAS "VIOLENTLY OPPOSED TO THE BALKANIZATION OF AFRICA." AS FOR ERITREA, IT HAD THE RIGHT TO AUTONOMY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ETHIOPIAN STATE, BUT THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF GRANTING IT INDEPENDENCE. SENGHOR CALLED THE OGADEN ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY, SPECULATING THAT "PERHAPS THE CREATION OF A CONFEDERATION REGROUPING THE SUDAN, ETHIOPIA, SOMALIA AND JIBOUTI COULD PUT A STOP TO ALL THESE CONFLICTS, WHETHER ERITREA OR THE OGADEN."

4. SENGHOR AND SENEGAL HAVE SAID NOTHING ABOUT CRITICAL ROLE OF SOVIETS AS ARMS SUPPLIERS IN HORN OF AFRICA SITUATION. QUESTIONED ON THIS POINT, AMB SYLLA TOLD US THAT IN GOS VIEW, THE SPIRIT OF THE OAU SUMMIT AT LIBREVILLE (JULY 2-5) CONTINUES TO PREVAIL. THE ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION COMMITTEE, ALTHOUGH INACTIVE, CONTINUES TO EXIST. IN ADDITION, SENEGAL AND PRESIDENT SENGHOR HAD SUCCESSFULLY TAKEN A LEADING ROLE IN

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OBTAINING THE SUPPORT OF THE OAU MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF NON-INTERVENTION BY OUTSIDE POWERS AND TRUE NON-ALIGNMENT. FURTHERMORE, SAID SYLLA, SENGHOR'S EARLIER CRITICISMS OF THE ROLE OF OUTSIDE POWERS IN ANGOLA AND THE SHABA REVOLT COULD BE TAKEN BY INFERENCE AS OPPOSITION TO SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA TODAY.

5. WE PROBED WITH SYLLA ON WHY SENEGAL AND OTHER MODERATE AFRICAN STATES WERE PASSING IN SILENCE OVER THE SOVIET ROLE IN FUELING THE HORN OF AFRICA CONFLICT. SYLLA'S RESPONSE WAS TO TURN THE TABLES AROUND. HE ARGUED THAT THE VERY SCALE OF INVOLVEMENT, WITH THE USSR, GDR, AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA SUPPLYING ETHIOPIA AND CERTAIN MIDDLE EAST POWERS SUPPORTING SOMALIA HAD TRANSFORMED THE CONFLICT IN THE HORN INTO A STRUGGLE OF GLOBAL DIMENSIONS. SINCE THE CONFLICT WAS NOW GLOBAL, ONLY THE U.S. COULD INFLUENCE IT. SYLLA MAINTAINED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD UTILIZE ITS BARGAINING POWER AND ITS STRATEGIC WORLD ASSETS TO APPLY PRESSURE ON THE USSR.

6. WE GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SENEGALESE, PROBABLY LIKE OTHER AFRICAN MODERATES, ARE BADLY TORN OVER

THE SITUATION IN THE HORN. ON THE ONE HAND THEY HAVE ALWAYS FAVORED AS VIRTUALLY IMMUTABLE THE OAU PRINCIPLE OF THE INVIOABILITY OF FRONTIERS AS INHERITED FROM THE COLONIAL ERA. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY ARE SERIOUSLY TROUBLED BY WHAT THEY SEE AS A CRUEL AND REPRESSIVE MARXIST REGIME IN ETHIOPIA AND BY THE SOVIET ROLE, BOTH IDEALOGICALLY AND AS ARMS SUPPLIER. ONE MFA OFFICIAL (NOT SYLLA) CRITICIZED THE SENGHOR STATEMENT TO LE MONDE AS OLD HAT, OUTDATED.

7. I THINK THE MOST PRODUCTIVE APPROACH HERE WOULD BE FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO INSTRUCT ME TO RAISE WITH PRESIDENT SENGHOR, ON HIS RETURN TO DAKAR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 23, OUR CONCERNS OVER SOVIET ACTIVITY IN THE HORN. I COULD PROBE
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WITH HIM AT THAT TIME THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE AND OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS MIGHT BE WILLING TO VOICE PUBLICLY THEIR CONCERNS. IF IT FITS IN WITH DEPARTMENT'S OVERALL PLAN, A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OR FROM PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD HELP GREATLY TO SET THE STAGE. I REGRET ONLY THAT SOME DELAY MAY OCCUR BEFORE I AM ABLE TO SEE SENGHOR, BUT ON THE OTHERHAND THE GOS IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVES ON THE HORN OF AFRICA SITUATION WITHOUT THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND FULL APPROVAL.
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